

Run Response Committee
February 8, 2005
1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Attendance: Melissa Beecher, Sheli Schindler, Lori Griggs, Bob Willhelm, Sandy Thompson, Cheri Miller, Chilton Leedom, Merry Wills, Cansa Ramsey, Andy Stebbing, Kris Strand.

2004 Statistics on runaways

The statistics were passed out for review. Melissa explained that these statistics only included youth on run that a broadcast was issued for. Bob estimated that there was approximately 80 more youth reported each year that did not appear on this list because they came back before the broadcast was issued.

Melissa summarized the statistics. She stated that there was a 14.8% increase in run reports between 2003 and 2004 but this only came out to a 3.8% increase when you looked at the number of different individual youth.

Melissa commented that there was a 34.5% increase in number of run reports for males which was a 9% increase in number of different male youth on run but there was virtually no change for female youth.

Melissa stated that it appears that more minorities were on run in 2004 than in 2003. There was a 15.9% increase in number of run reports for Black youth with 1.7% increase in number of different Black youth on run, a 87.3% increase in number of run reports for Hispanic youth with a 41.1% increase in number of different Hispanic youth on run and a 20% increase in number of run reports for Native American youth with 55.6% increase in number of different Native American youth on run.

The number of run reports for Asian youth increased but the number of different Asian youth decreased 44.4%. She explained that this statistic can be misleading because in 2003, nine Asian youth went on run for a total of 10 times and in 2004, only 5 Asian youth went on run for a total of 14 times.

While there was a 5.8% increase in number of run reports for White youth there was no change in number of different White youth on run

The average number of days youth were gone decreased from 9.3 days in 2003 to 6 days in 2004. The percentage of youth that were gone one or less days also increased from 54.8% in 2003 to 59.8% in 2004.

Melissa stated that there were more reports from the Freeway address with 172 in 2004 compared to 111 in 2003. Merry stated that she met with HHS to discuss defining when a youth was on run. In this meeting Sherrie stated HHS couldn't determine when a youth is on run, that is for the provider (Cedars) to determine.

Merry stated that Cedars is looking at ways to prevent youth from running from Freeway although there are contract and resource issues that affect what they can do in this area. Merry stated that she would be contacting the Omaha shelter to find out their run statistics as well as discuss ways that they prevent youth from running from their facility. Bob asked if HHS would pay Cedars to bring in additional staff when youth are at high risk for running. Merry stated that they can bring in staff but it cannot be for one on one counseling with the youth. Cheri stated that in December Freeway had 70-80 hours of extra staff time to deal with youth with high risk run behaviors. Cheri also stated that if a youth has run numerous times, they would call in extra staff. Cheri added that youth running revolves around relationships formed in Freeway where a group of youth may decide to run. Merry stated one of the problems is that Freeway will have 4-5 treatment level kids intermixed with the youth. Freeway must accept everyone so it becomes difficult when treatment youth are mixed with the other youth. Merry asked if an officer could drop by occasionally. She thought just the presence would deter some youth from running. Bob stated that Law Enforcement is at the table because they are spending an excessive amount of time dealing with runaways. Bob said that he feels that this is not their responsibility that their responsibility is to take a report each time that a youth runs. If excessive youth are running then Cedars needs to look into providing additional staff and security for the youth. Melissa asked if F3 or CTA could be utilized instead. Merry stated that she would look into getting F3 or CTA more involved.

Sheli added that from detentions perspective of going from an old facility with no classification to a new facility with the ability to classify she understand the issues that Cedars is facing. Sheli asked how they are placed in Freeway. Sandy stated that they look for other placements first and are placed in shelter as a last resort. First families on emergency care list are contacted and other alternatives are looked at. Sheli stated with the 1-800 number for HHS some of the staff are good and some are new or unfamiliar with what to do, is there a way that the HHS staff could know the spaces available. Sandy stated that they do know somewhat because each week they have a meeting to discuss where the openings are but the problem of finding placement arises when it is after hours.

It was asked what the average stay for youth at Freeway was – There are 12 beds and the average stay is 15 days, the average for state wards is 25 days and private placement average is 10 days.

Review last months run list

Sheli discussed the statistics from last months run report. It was asked how many youth LSO had on run last year. Andy stated that he has a total of 63 runaway reports but the calls are at the bottom of his response list. Many are from Christian Heritage. He has dropped them off at the Assessment Center in the past and this has worked very well and he stated he is appreciative of this service because it expedites placement. Bob stated that LPD hasn't utilized this service as much as they should. Lori added that she doesn't want law enforcement spending hours locating a placement for youth and that the Assessment Center could help expedite placement. Melissa asked it was just an issue of getting the word out to the officers. Bob stated that communicating and explaining Assessments role to the officers and others at LPD is needed. It was asked if LSO would like to add the names of the youth on run to the faxed list of youth on run. Assessment and Probation review this list and decide who is on probation, who is private, who is a state ward, who has warrants or needs to go to detention. This will help further expedite

placement by knowing the information when a youth is picked up. It was asked if this information and other information could be included in broadcasts so that the officer would immediately know what to do with a youth instead of having drive to the Assessment Center. LPD agreed that they would look into this option and how this could work.

Information sharing

Merry asked if there were kids on the list but not in the system. Sheli stated yes that there are approximately 38% that are not state wards, on probation or in the system. Bob asked if this 38% could go to YAC. Sheli stated that she would be willing to work together to find resources for this type of youth. Sheli stated that Assessments original goal was to work with Cedars SOS program to send out information to families that may need services but it was the CJIS committee's belief that this information was private. Bob stated that he talked with Chief Cassidy and he stated that they would be happy to provide labels, a cover letter and sign an agreement to work with an agency to provide information on services to the families of youth not in the system. Bob stated that Cedars would need to take care of the mailing and stuffing of the envelopes and agree not to keep a database on the youth. Merry stated that Cedars would be happy to do this. Bob stated he hasn't talked with the computer people at LPD yet but would talk with them soon to look at how they could set this up. It was agreed that the name of the youth would not need to be provided on the label and that Cedars could just send the information to the person making the report.

Reviewing the MOU on runaways and discussing the roles of each entity dealing with runaways

Sheli distributed the MOU draft for the Assessment Center and asked for feedback from the group. The section with Cedars and the SOS program needs to be added as well as the section on F3. Sheli asked that Law Enforcement, Probation, and HHS all review their sections and provide feedback.

Set next meeting date

It was discussed that this group should meet sooner than in one month to make revisions to the MOU. The group decided that they would meet on February 22nd at 1:15 p.m.

Updating the Lancaster County Comprehensive Juvenile Services Plan - Priority One

Melissa stated that by 2006 she hopes to have an updated version of the Juvenile Services Plan. She stated that some members of this group might be asked to help set priorities and goals and objectives at a later date. Melissa stated what she is needing at this point is to know what has been accomplished from the current plan and she thought that this group may be able to help since it is a preventative group that is meeting regularly. The group reviewed the objectives and actions steps under priority one.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Beecher